

NEEDS ANALYSIS OF BLIND STUDENTS IN TEACHING PRACTICE PROGRAM

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Abstract: As an inclusive university, Brawijaya University has accepted students with special needs in some different study programs. Two of those are blind / visually impaired students who enrol English Language Education Study Program in which the program prepares the students to be English teachers. As a consequence, the students must be ready to do teaching practice in a public school when they are in the seventh semester. This study is going to find out the problems of the visually impaired students in conducting teaching practice in the school. It also elaborates the teaching media and method that they need to support them to do teaching practice. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative. To get the data, the researchers interview the visual impairments, the two volunteers who become their peer assistant them during learning process in the university, and the lecturer who becomes the advisor of the visually impaired students. Besides, observation is also important to know the application of teaching practice in their real class. The observation is done by recording the teaching activity conducted by the visually impaired students. The results of the interview and the observation are used to formulate the needs of the visually impaired students in teaching process in the real school. This study gives benefit not only for the students in preparing their teaching practice, but also for the institution to accommodate the needs of the visually impaired students for their teaching process.

Keywords: needs analysis, blind students, teaching practice

1 INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education is a term that refers to all students with special needs, regardless their conditions, receive their total education within the regular education environment. It means that all students (both the students with and without special needs) are able to study together and participate in all aspects. Education of visually impaired students was the first to develop a range of special education program options, beginning with specialized schools in 1829 and extending to inclusive (including "full inclusion") public school program options since 1900 (Khochen, n.y).

Inclusive education in Indonesia is regulated in Law Number 20 year 2003 concerning National Education System and National Education Minister Regulation Number 70 year 2009 concerning inclusive education. To implement the regulation, students with special needs are welcome to enrol the regular class in certain public schools, including higher education such as Brawijaya University.

Since 2012/2013 academic year, Brawijaya University (UB) has admitted students with special needs through a certain selection for

disabled students. The students enrol different study programs that they are interested in. To accommodate the needs of the students, *Pusat Studi Layanan Disabilitas* (PSLD) Universitas Brawijaya has volunteers who voluntarily assist the disabled students either inside or outside the classroom settings. These peer assistants have different responsibility due to the different needs of the students. For the deaf and hard of hearing (D/HH) students, for example, the peer assistants become interpreters who transfer the lecturer's spoken language into sign language in the class.

English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) is one of study programs in UB that has accepted two visually impaired (VI) students. These students must attend the regular classes and fulfil the criteria of the curriculum as those who are without special needs. This program is conducted to prepare the students to be English teachers, all students are obliged to do peer teaching when they are in the 6th semester. Moreover, in the following semester, they also have to take teaching practice program which is done in the public high schools for 6 weeks.

Due to their limitation, the students with visual impairments might find complicated

problems especially in teaching learning process. The presence of a peer assistant provided by PS LD does not guarantee the success of their study, as teaching and learning environment relates to many different aspects and relies heavily on visual things. In reality, the visually impaired students in this study program really count on their volunteers in many activities, including making notes, doing the tasks, and others. It is caused by the low independence of the students that cannot support their learning activity. Furthermore, there is limited appropriate learning method and devices that can support them to accommodate their needs in teaching and learning activities. Thus, it is important for related institutions (including lecturers, PS LD, and others) to analyze the needs of the visually impaired students to support their success in learning process.

Related study concerning with the problems and needs of students with visual impairments in learning process was conducted by Khochen (n.y). Her issues are related to what teachers need to know to facilitate the visual impairments in the classroom. She states that every visual impairment can access information using a range of different mediums and tools based on their preferences. Audio materials, materials in electronic formats, using magnification, screen readers, computers with speech or magnification software, touch screens with voice over, and low-vision or Braille devices are some of the examples. Moreover, a building's physical environment affects the comfort, concentration and well-being of all learners, especially the visual impairments as it can affect what and how they can learn. This aspect is related to lighting, colour, the place of furniture and fixtures (the layout), and the acoustics.

Besides the facilitation needed by the visual impairments, there are skills that should be mastered by visually impaired students. First, they have to master mobility and orientation skills that support their independence in education and in society at large. Then, acquiring IT skills may help them to take notes and to access information independently. Finally, having good communication skills is very important to help them to build friendships and

form social networks that all support their inclusion.

Further, Khochen explains that teachers should make the teaching and learning environment active and engaging. It can be done when the teaching content reflects the needs of the visual impairments. Considering the planning and presenting of teaching, resource availability and pace of delivery, and assessment of progress are also important.

Based on Khochen explanations, it is concluded that the success of learning process of the visual impairments are affected by many different aspects that should be carefully prepared. Thus, it is crucial to investigate the needs of the visually impaired students in this study program, as they are going to be teachers and they must be independent. This study, then, is intended to find the problems faced by the visual impairments in teaching process. The problems found is used to formulate the needs of the virtually impaired students to practice teaching and to find solutions that can accommodate them to do the activity in the real school. The solutions cover the media and methods that can support them to teach.

2 METHOD

This study is conducted to analyze the needs of virtually impaired students in teaching process. Descriptive qualitative approach was used in this study. The data were taken from three different sources. The main source was the virtually impairment students. There were two students and they were doing their teaching practice in the public high schools at present. To get the data, interview and observation during teaching learning activities were done. The interview was conducted to get the information related to the problems they face before and during the process of teaching. It was also related to the preparation of teaching. To get the more accurate information, observation during the teaching practice was also carried out. It was used to find out the problems occur in the class during the activity.

The data were also taken from the peer assistants who assisted the virtually impaired students during their study in UB, and the lecturer of Study Program of English Language Education who also became the advisor of the

virtual impairments. To get the data, interview was conducted to get the information about the preparation of the virtual impairments before performing in the class. The preparation involved material preparation, teaching method, and the media that was applied.

After all data were complete, the researchers analyzed all the information to identify the problems of the virtual impairments in conducting teaching activity. The problems found were then analysed and observed by using theories and previous researches. Based on the result of the analysis, the needs of the virtually impairment students to teach were identified.

3 FINDINGS

3.1 The Problems Faced by the Students

The result of interview with respondents indicates that the students have two primary problems namely internal and external problems. The internal problems are problems coming from their individual competence such as designing documents related to teaching preparation such as lesson plan, develop teaching media and assessment.

3.1.1 Internal Problems

The internal problem related to design lesson plan includes the way to develop ideas using an appropriate language and layout. These problems occurred due to the absence of the student in understanding the layout of lesson plan, the content and appropriate language used in the lesson plan. This constraint can be overcome by the help of their peer assistant such as constructing objectives, developing specific objectives, arranging schedule, distributing percentage of activities as well as designing assessment criteria. In terms of typing, the student seemed to be very skilful in typing the teaching documents using computer software called JAWS (Job Access With Speech) a kind of computer software designed for the blinds. This is one of the world's most popular windows screen reader. JAWS is developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content or navigating with a mouse. JAWS provides speech and Braille output for the most popular computer applications on the private computer. Using this software, the student has no difficulty at all in typing the document.

In terms of developing teaching media and assessment, the role of peer assistant is desperately needed. The peer assistant helps dictating the instruction and all of the procedures needed to accomplish the teaching media. Besides dictating, long discussion on constructing assessment method and material is frequently held between the two.

3.1.2 External Problems

The external problem is problems from the external side of the respondent, such as problems coming from the students. The external problem commonly occurred during the teaching practice is controlling the classroom. The respondent frequently has difficulties in managing the noisy classroom. Most of her students at the time of teaching practice are male and seems to be more difficult to control. She has no innovation on how to manage the classroom well. This time, the role of peer assistant is needed. The peer assistant helps the respondent by whispering the names of the noisy students and asking them to do a certain task. By keeping the student on task, the classroom can be managed well and the noisy classroom can be made calmer.

5 CONCLUSIONS

As stated by Khochen (n.y) identifying the needs of the visually impaired students help them to have equal access to the educational environment as their peers; what teachers would need to do to include the learner in their educational sessions and what the educational institution needs to provide to allow equal access to everyone including the visually impaired students. Moreover, recommendations should be shared with the educational institutions, teachers and learners, so that all can understand what changes would be most helpful if put in place.

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7 REFERENCES

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